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INTRODUCTION

This revision of the Minnesota LunchPower manual is a project of the 1995-96 Minnesota Team Nutrition Training Grant. The goal was to update the material from the first Minnesota Lunch Power manual and include recent information on the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children. The School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children final regulation, published June 13, 1995, requires school food authorities plan menus that meet the Dietary Guidelines and provide key nutrients essential to the growth and development of children. In addition, schools are allowed the flexibility of choosing from different menu planning systems. While each menu planning option has its own distinct advantages, the primary focus of the Minnesota LunchPower manual is to supplement the Food-Based menu planning system. Included in this manual revision are two four-week cycle menus that are food-based. Nutritional analysis of the menu cycles is included. Recipes from USDA's "A Tool Kit for Healthy School Meals" and Minnesota LunchPower are included in the menu cycle. The revision of the Minnesota LunchPower manual also contains an expanded recipe list along with updates on some of the original recipes. A marketing plan for promotion of Dietary Guidelines completes the additional revisions to the original manual.

Many school districts have used Minnesota LunchPower recipes over the years and have been successful in reducing fat in school menus and offering healthy food choices. With this revision schools will be able to fine tune even more their school menus, and provide their students healthy meals that appeal to them and meet the USDA nutrition standards. This manual is an additional resource that can be used along with the many other resources developed through USDA's Team Nutrition.

MINNESOTA LUNCHPOWER

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FOREWORD

The 4th edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans included for the first time children two years of age and older and defined quantitative levels for fat and saturated fat. With release of this information came the challenge to serve meals in schools that follow these Guidelines.

No longer can menus be planned based on the assumption that they meet certain nutrient levels. Actual nutritional analysis and documentation is necessary. Pilot testing of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department Children, Families and Learning's LunchPower Program by four school districts -- Minnetonka, Rochester, Mounds View and Hutchinson -- has proven that, with limited modifications, menus of excellent quality can be offered which are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines, and provide items children like and are used to without creating a great increase in food cost. Modifications required were threefold:

1. Reduce or increase the frequency with which a menu item is offered.
2. Purchase a different brand or product line of a menu item.
3. Decrease the amount of fat and sodium in a menu item's recipe.

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, building on the success of LunchPower and similar other studies conducted in the state, (Cancer Prevention Program conducted by the MN Department of Health in the St. Cloud School District, and the American Heart Association, CATCH Program, MN Affiliate's project in Anoka, Bemidji and Princeton School Districts) has developed the Minnesota LunchPower Program (MLP) with the expectation that it will be utilized in every school district in the state. It is the Child Nutrition Section's hope that through this program Minnesota will reach Healthy People 2000's goal, i.e., "Increase to at least 90% the proportion of school lunch and breakfast services with menus that are consistent with the nutrition principles in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans."

Successful implementation of the MN LunchPower Program is dependent on obtaining the support of administration, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community; training food service personnel on menu modifications; providing nutrition education for students; and merchandising the program. This handbook devotes a section to promotion of Dietary Guidelines, including a section on marketing your menu with a school year calendar planner.